

For Immediate Release:
September 27, 2012

Contact:
Ruth Cueto, Senior Aide
(408) 535-4933/(408) 340-8823 cell

COUNCILMEMBER LICCARDO JOINS COMMUNITY MARCH
Residents rally to take back S. 1st Street from Prostitution

SAN JOSE, CALIF. – Today, Thursday, Sept. 27th, Councilmember Sam Liccardo will join community members of the Guadalupe-Washington neighborhood in a **march along S. 1st Street at 6:30 p.m. in front of Biblioteca Latinoamericana, 921 S. 1st Street**. Organized by neighborhood activists and Santa Maria Urban Ministry, the march is in response to the increase in prostitution along the corridor, specifically around the library. The purpose of the march is to show *pimps* and *johns* that S. 1st Street is the backbone of the community and their illegal and egregious behavior will not be tolerated. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many of the “prostitutes” are minors from outside of town—young women who are being sexually exploited by sex traffickers as well as by those men who solicit them.

“The surrounding neighborhood is being victimized by this kind of activity,” said San José City Councilmember Sam Liccardo. “Our office and the San José Police Department field multiple calls every week from community members who tell us they can’t let their kids walk to the library or to the bus stop for fear of being harassed by pimps and prostitutes”.

“If we don’t stand up and react we are letting these young women and our community be further victimized” said Omar Torres, long-time Guadalupe-Washington resident and executive director of Santa Maria Urban Ministry. “We have and continue to work hard with our local schools and non-profits to keep the Guadalupe-Washington neighborhood a safe and thriving community.”

The issue of prostitution is plaguing other parts of the city as well; however the City of San José has taken an aggressive and proactive response. In late July the city successfully obtained a preliminary injunction against the Hotel Elan, located at 1215 South First Street, asserting that the hotel has become a public nuisance by allowing prostitution to regularly and openly take place on its property over the last 4 years. To date, the hotel has hired on-site security, installed cameras and a fence along the perimeter of the property. City staff from the Police Department, the City Attorney’s Office, and Councilmember Liccardo’s Office have been working with motel owners along the North First Street corridor to form a Hotel & Business Watch group. City staff offer training on topics such as burglary and robbery prevention. We hope to use this as a model to combat prostitution throughout the City. Councilmember Liccardo will soon release a proposal to promote the conversion of some motels to affordable housing.